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ABSTRACT

This paper describes survey results on the attitudes of Minnesota teachers toward their careers in general as well as data on the attitudes of teachers and principals toward alternative teaching roles being discussed nationally. This report also reviews survey data on the attitudes of teachers and principals toward the value and implementation of the career teaching role and analyzes the potential of a loan forgiveness program for career teachers as a strategy to improve student learning and the attractiveness of teaching careers. Based on survey results, a majority of Minnesota teachers believe that another teaching or administrator role in education could provide more satisfaction than their current teaching jobs. No one alternative teaching role emerged as a clear favorite of teachers. Based on the study, it was recommended that the state not establish a loan forgiveness program for career teachers under the Minnesota Improved Learning Law. (SI)

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# New Roles for Teachers
# Can They Improve Retention In the Teaching Profession?
# With
# Coordinating Board Recommendations

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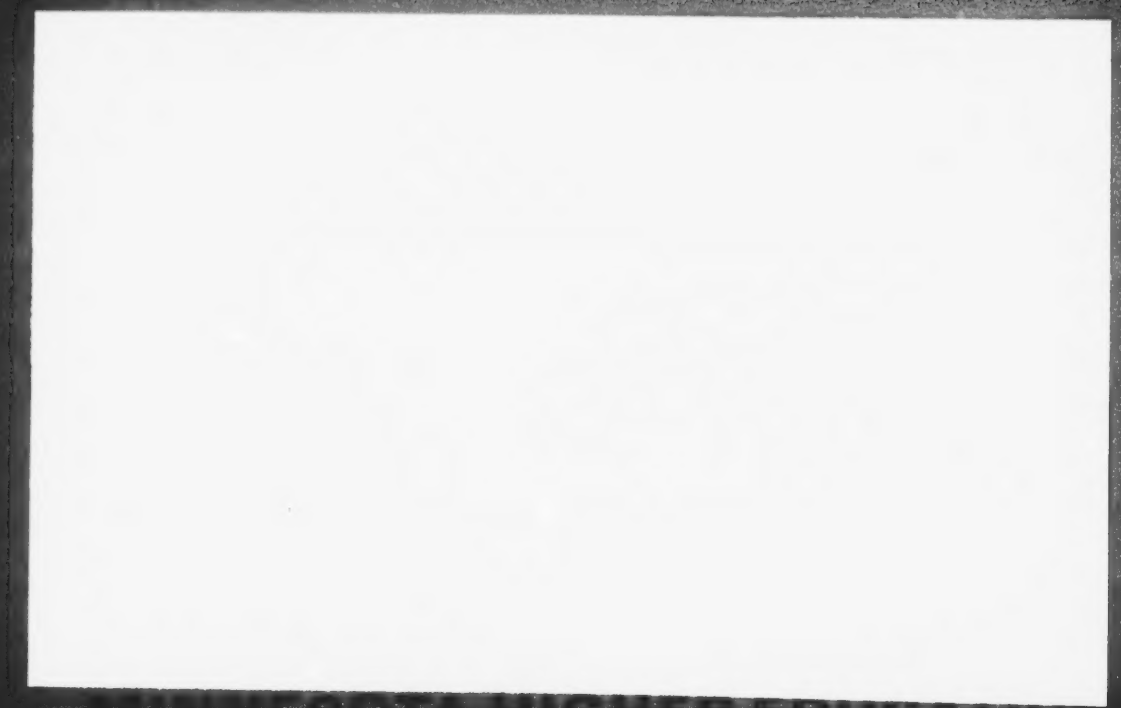

# New Roles for Teachers
# Can They Improve Retention In the Teaching Profession?
# With
# Coordinating Board Recommendations

Higher Education Coordinating Board

January 15, 1987

This study was supported by a grant from the National Conference of State Legislatures with funds from the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education.

SUBJECT: NEW ROLES FOR TEACHERS: CAN THEY IMPROVE RETENTION IN THE TEACHING PROFESSION? (Study of the need for a loan forgiveness program for career teachers, under the Minnesota Improved Learning Law.)

DATE: JANUARY 15, 1987

ACTION: THE HIGHER EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD RECOMMENDED THAT:

The state not establish a loan forgiveness program for career teachers under the Minnesota Improved Learning Law.

# OVERVIEW OF COORDINATING BOARD RECOMMENDATION

## Background and Rationale

The 1986 Legislature directed the Higher Education Coordinating Board to study the need for a loan forgiveness program for career teachers as defined in Minnesota Statutes 129B.41-129B.47.

**BACKGROUND**

The legislative mandate required the Board to address the need for a loan forgiveness program to finance the education of persons preparing for a specific teaching role defined in legislation. Following adoption of the mandate, the National Conference of State Legislatures provided a grant for the study with the provision that it also consider teacher retention issues. To make the study relevant to other states, it was broadened to include alternative teaching roles other than the career teaching role as defined in Minnesota. Mailed surveys to samples of Minnesota teachers and principals were used to gather information on attitudes toward alternative teaching roles, including the role of career teachers.

The staff report, New Roles for Teachers: Can They Improve Retention in the Teaching Profession?, describes survey results on the attitudes of Minnesota teachers toward their careers in general and presents data on the attitudes of teachers and principals toward alternative teaching roles being discussed nationally. The report also reviews survey data on the attitudes of teachers and principals toward the value and implementation of the career teaching role and analyzes the potential of a loan forgiveness program for career teachers as a strategy to improve student learning and the attractiveness of teaching careers.

## FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Based on survey results, a majority of Minnesota teachers believe that another teaching or administrative role in education could provide more satisfaction than their current teaching jobs. In general, more teachers aré attracted to alternative teaching roles than to administrative or support positions in education. Teachers who are less satisfied with teaching are more likely to be attracted to alternative teaching roles than teachers who are very happy in their current positions. The development of alternative career paths for teachers, therefore, may help retain people in teaching who otherwise would leave the profession.

No one alternative teaching role emerged as a clear favorite of teachers. To improve retention, a variety of alternative roles should be available to teachers as they grow professionally.

The role of the career teacher under the Minnesota Improved Learning Law was one of the most appealing roles to teachers. Moreover, principals see this role as potentially enhancing student learning. Several significant barriers to implementing this role in the schools were identified, including funding, collective bargaining, and teacher qualifications.

A loan forgiveness program to finance the education of career teachers would address only teachers' lack of prior preparation for the responsibilities of a career teacher. A loan forgiveness program, however, would be difficult to promote unless the employment opportunities for career teachers were better established.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the staff study, the Coordinating Board on January 15, 1987, recommended the following:

**That the state not establish a loan forgiveness program for career teachers under the Minnesota Improved Learning Law.**

Rationale: The career teaching model is promising, but it has not been widely implemented. Further, principals report several significant barriers to implementation besides the inability to hire qualified teachers. While there may be a need in the schools for the kinds of functions career teachers would perform, this need has not yet been translated into an unmet demand for persons with specialized graduate education.

Impact: Direct strategies to promote understanding and appreciation of the potential contributions of career teachers are more likely to accelerate implementation of this staffing model than a loan forgiveness program.

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## CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

Recent state policy changes to improve the quality of the nation's teachers often have focused on making teacher education programs and licensing standards more selective and more rigorous. Other attempted reforms tackle aspects of teaching jobs and careers that act as barriers to attracting and retaining good teachers.

The teaching profession has been described as unattractive for a variety of reasons, including low salary levels, poor prospects for advancement, lack of respect, inadequate support and working conditions, and bureaucratic, demeaning management structures and practices.

Among the recommendations for reform have been suggestions that teaching roles should be broadened to allow for diverse career paths within the profession. A major policy issue to be investigated is:

> How can alternative teaching roles be developed as a strategy for improving teacher retention?

Because Minnesota law defines an alternative teaching role, the "career teacher" under the 1981 Minnesota Improved Learning Law, the legislature is particularly interested in learning how that role could be developed to improve education.

### MANDATE

The 1986 Minnesota Legislature directed the Higher Education Coordinating Board to:

> study the need for a loan forgiveness program for career teachers under improved learning programs as defined in Minnesota Statutes, section

> 129B.46. The board shall consult with the chairs of the education committees of the legislature prior to conducting the study. The board shall report by January 1, 1987, to the education committees of the legislature.[1]

Subsequently, the National Conference of State Legislatures provided a grant of $4,000 to the Coordinating Board for the project. The Conference requested that, in addition to evaluating the need for a loan forgiveness program, the study analyze the potential impact of alternative teaching roles on retention in teaching. The scope of the study was therefore expanded to include an evaluation of the career teacher concept as a strategy to improve retention. To provide a basis for examining the relative attractiveness of other roles in education, the study also gathered data on administrative and counseling positions and teaching roles being discussed nationally, such as mentor teachers and lead teachers.

Although Minnesota's definition of the career teacher is unique, it incorporates concepts proposed by educators in other states. The other roles examined in the study also are applicable in states that do not have legislation similar to the Improved Learning Law.

## SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the study are to:

- Identify characteristics of Minnesota teachers who are likely and unlikely to leave teaching,
- Identify how attractive alternative careers in education would be to Minnesota teachers,
- Identify the attitudes of principals toward developing alternative teaching careers,

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1. Laws of Minnesota for 1986, First Special Session, Chapter 1, Article 10.

- o Identify the characteristics of teachers who are most attracted to the role of the career teacher under the Minnesota Improved Learning Law,
- o Identify the further education teachers would need to assume the role of a career teacher, and
- o Evaluate the need for a loan forgiveness program to fund teachers preparing for the career teacher role.

## NATIONAL INTEREST IN ALTERNATIVE TEACHING ROLES

Renewed interest in the status of the teaching profession is part of the national examination and debate over the achievement of American children and youth. Teaching attracts a smaller number of college educated people than in past years and those who enter teaching are said to be not as talented as people choosing other valued professions. These problems have been attributed to several characteristics of teaching jobs, including poor pay, low prestige, unattractive working conditions and limited opportunities for professional growth.[2] This study focused on alternative teaching roles as one way to improve professional growth opportunities in the teaching profession in order to attract and retain excellent teachers.

Two recent national reports propose restructuring the teaching profession to provide new, more challenging roles that teachers can assume as they gain additional experience and education. The Task Force on Teaching as a Profession calls these senior positions "lead teachers." Lead teachers would hold advanced certificates from a National Board for Professional Teaching Standards and would be selected for their recognized expertise and effectiveness. Lead teachers

2. Linda Darling-Hammond, Beyond the Commission Reports: The Coming Crisis in Teaching, The Rand Corporation (July, 1984).

could be responsible for helping other teachers become more effective, for making personnel decisions, and for organizing the entire instructional program.[3]

Another report, by a consortium of major research universities, also proposes a hierarchy of teaching functions to be performed by people with different levels of education. The most advanced positions would be held by senior teachers called Career Professionals. Doctoral education in a specialty area normally would be required to become a Career Professional. Some suggested specializations are curriculum improvement, supervision of other instructional staff, testing and measurement, research, and staff development.[4]

Both the Carnegie and Holmes proposals would enable teachers to increase their compensation by qualifying for and assuming additional responsibilities. The teaching profession envisioned in these reports would be hierarchical and structured to provide teachers with a career ladder offering salary advancement. The purposes of a career ladder have been described as:

- To encourage good teachers to stay in the profession by providing advancement possibilities within teaching,
- To counteract stagnation by varying teachers' responsibilities and activities at each level,
- To reward and motivate superior teachers through enhanced prestige, responsibility, and increased remuneration.[5]

Under most career ladders teachers would advance on the basis of additional education, advanced responsibilities, and merit. The use of merit, which is

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3. Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century, The Report of the Task Force on Teaching as a Profession, (May, 1986).
4. Holmes Group, Inc., Tomorrow's Teachers: A Report of the Holmes Group, (1986).
5. Cresap, McCormick and Paget, Teacher Incentives: A Tool for Effective Management, The National Association of Secondary School Principals and others, (1984).

always somewhat subjective, to determine compensation has not been successful, and teachers are wary of plans that include merit as a factor in promotion. Teachers are likely to continue their opposition to pure merit pay plans that provide salary advancement solely as a reward for superior performance. Still, some reformers believe teachers may accept differences in teacher pay as long as they are compensated for additional responsibility.[6] Others contend that teachers probably will accept only salary differentials that are based on "extra pay for extra work" as well as specialized responsibilities.[7]

Teachers give modest support to changes that would offer them salary advancement based on new responsibilities or extra work. In a 1985 poll, 34 percent of the teachers said that paying teachers partly according to the specific jobs they hold would "help a lot" in attracting good teachers. Forty-five percent said it would "help a little", but 19 percent thought it "would not help at all." Extended contracts received even less support. Only 24 percent said they would "help a lot", 38 percent said they would "help a little", and 36 percent said they "would not help at all."

Former teachers were somewhat more likely to endorse these ideas, but like current teachers, they gave much more support to higher salaries for all beginning teachers, salary increases based on education and experience, help with non-teaching duties, and advanced study sabbaticals as strategies to attract talented people into teaching. Only 15 percent of these former teachers gave "no chance for advancement" as a reason for leaving teaching.[8]

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6. Gary A. Griffin, "The School as a Workplace and the Master Teacher Concept", The Elementary School Journal, Vol. 86, No. 1, (1985).
7. Laura A. Wagner, "Ambiguities and Possibliities in California's Mentor Teacher Program", Educational Leadership, Vol. 43, No. 3, (1985).
8. Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, The Metropolitan Life Survey of Former Teachers in America, (1985).

Career ladders and alternative role proposals, therefore, do not appear to be the most promising avenues of reform in the minds of most teachers. They could, however, be one strategy pursued along with other changes to improve the attractiveness of teaching careers.

The alternative teaching roles included in this study could be part of a structure that provides opportunities for satisfying individual interests and abilities throughout a teaching career without salary differences being tied to these different kinds of responsibilities. Alternatively, should certain roles be judged to be more advanced than others, they could be part of a career ladder that offers salary advancement as well. The career teacher role under the Minnesota Improved Learning Law incorporates extra pay for extra work through offering teachers extended contracts to take additional responsibilities.

## THE MINNESOTA IMPROVED LEARNING LAW

The Minnesota Improved Learning and Principal-Teacher, Counselor-Teacher, and Career Teacher Law was passed in 1981 and amended in 1983.[9] The law provides for extended contracts for educators in order to implement activities to improve student learning. The Council on Quality Education makes grants to school districts to fund locally-designed programs that meet the requirements of the law. For Fiscal Year 1986, the Council awarded $112,653 to 15 districts. Grants are awarded in declining amounts for no more than three years. For the current school year, second and third year projects were continued, but the level of funding did not permit new projects to be started.

Mandatory components of funded programs are:

- Participation of a specifically designated person under extended contract as principal-teacher, counselor-teacher or career teacher as defined in the legislation,

9. Minn. Stat. 129B.42 - 129B.47.

- o An advisory committee with a majority of parents appointed by the local district board,
- o A plan to involve parents in planning the educational experiences of their children,
- o An annual plan for the district to evaluate program goals and objectives, and
- o A plan for the district to fund the program after the third year.

The law suggests a variety of specific learning improvement efforts that can be supported with grant funds.

As defined in the law, career teachers are to be assigned to 125 students. The number of students is reduced if the teacher also serves as school principal or if special education students are being served.

The law states that the "career teacher shall not be the exclusive teacher for students assigned to him or her but shall serve the function of developing and implementing a student's overall learning program." The intent of this definition is to extend available learning time to 12 months of the year, take advantage of community and other resources that can be used for student learning, involve parents in the education of their children, and individualize learning programs to the interests, abilities, and needs of the learner.

## METHODOLOGY

Mail surveys of Minnesota public school teachers and principals were used to develop the data for this study.

### Sample Selection and Rate of Return

Samples of Minnesota teachers and principals were drawn from the licensure files of the Minnesota State Department of Education. When the samples were

drawn, these files contained information on school assignments for the 1985-86 school year. Surveys were mailed to these addresses, but teachers and principals who are not employed in a public school for 1986-87 were screened out before the results were compiled.

Both samples were random across all grade levels, locations, and subjects. To focus on the attitudes of younger teachers, who are most likely to be considering career shifts, the sample of teachers was selected from those whose initial licenses were granted after July 1, 1959. Persons licensed in earlier years would now be age 50 or older.

A 3 percent sample of teachers yielded 1,186 names. After one follow-up mailing, 845 valid responses were received for a response rate of 71 percent.

A 45 percent sample of principals yielded 607 names. After one follow-up mailing, 425 valid responses were received for a response rate of 70 percent.

## Limitations

The response rate is considered acceptable for a mailed survey. There may be differences, however, in the attitudes of people who did and did not respond. It is not possible to say whether the teachers and principals who responded to the surveys are typical of all educators in Minnesota.

Survey questions generally asked about opinions or attitudes about alternative teaching roles. In many instances, the teacher or principal responding might have limited exposure or understanding of how alternative roles would work. The survey results, therefore, indicate how educators feel about these questions today. Their opinions might not be based on experience and might change if alternative teaching roles became more common. Field studies where alternative roles have been tried might yield better information about the impact on teachers' relationships and career satisfaction.

Current opinions, however, are significant because they indicate whether alternative roles are likely to be welcomed by educators or whether they are likely to be resisted. If educators do not believe that alternative roles will benefit them, reforms based on creating new teaching functions would face formidable obstacles.

Most importantly, this study did not examine the actual effects of alternative teaching roles on student learning or student attitudes toward learning and school. Any widespread adoption of alternative teaching roles must demonstrate that they help achieve these goals. This study concentrated on potential effects on retention of teachers, an essential area of needed reform, but not the only test of public policy toward education.

**CONTENTS**

Chapter II of this report describes survey results on the attitudes of Minnesota teachers toward their careers in general. Chapter III presents data on the attitudes of teachers and principals toward alternative teaching roles being discussed nationally.

The role of the career teacher under the Minnesota Improved Learning Law is examined in Chapters IV and V. Chapter IV reviews survey data on the attitudes of teachers and principals toward the value and implementation of the career teaching role. Chapter V analyzes the potential of a loan forgiveness program for career teachers as a strategy to improve student learning and the attractiveness of teaching careers.

Chapter VI concludes the report with an overview of the findings and their implications.

## CHAPTER II. SATISFACTION WITH TEACHING AS A CAREER

Problems in the schools frequently are attributed to an inability to attract and retain talented people as teachers. The attitudes of teachers toward their careers, therefore, are of interest to policymakers interested in school improvement. In addition to shedding light on teacher retention, the attitudes of current teachers also may reveal aspects of teaching that discourage recruitment of new teachers. If today's teachers are dissatisfied, they are unlikely to encourage their students to follow the same career.

This chapter presents survey findings on the attitudes of Minnesota teachers toward their teaching careers and the likelihood that they will leave teaching within the next five years.

### SATISFACTION WITH TEACHING

A survey of Minnesota teachers shows that most are satisfied with their career choice. As shown in Table 1, 76 percent reported being very satisfied or mostly satisfied. A very small number--4 percent--are clearly dissatisfied. Nearly one out of five teachers, or 19 percent, however, said they are equally satisfied and dissatisfied, a lukewarm response that indicates room for improvement.

Satisfaction with teaching was not related to an urban, suburban, or rural location or to teachers' sex, age, years of experience, level of education, self-assessed teaching ability, or enrollment in a graduate education program. Satisfaction was related to the level of school in which a teacher works. Elementary school teachers reported more satisfaction with teaching than middle or high school teachers.

**TABLE 1. TEACHERS' SATISFACTION WITH THEIR CHOICE OF TEACHING AS A CAREER**

Percentage responses to:

Considering all aspects of your job today, how satisfied are you with your choice of teaching as a career? (N=845)

| | |
|---|---|
| Very satisfied | 33% |
| Mostly satisfied | 43 |
| Equally satisfied and dissatisfied | 19 |
| Mostly dissatisfied | 3 |
| Very dissatisfied | 1 |
| No answer | 1 |
| Total | 100% |

SOURCE: Higher Education Coordinating Board Survey, (1986).

PLANS TO LEAVE TEACHING

Over one-fifth, 22 percent, of Minnesota teachers said that they are likely to leave teaching within the next five years. Another 17 percent said they are not sure, as shown in Table 2.

The less satisfied a teacher is, the more likely he or she is to plan on leaving teaching. Only 12 percent of the teachers who said they are very satisfied with their careers think it is likely that they will leave teaching within five years. Among teachers who are satisfied, 20 percent think they will change careers. Among teachers who are equally satisfied and dissatisfied, 37 percent think they will leave. The number of teachers who reported being dissatisfied with teaching is too small for firm conclusions, but 53 percent in the sample plan to leave.

Many teachers who are equally satisfied and dissatisfied are also ambivalent about changing careers. Over a third, 35 percent, are not sure whether they will stay in teaching. Despite their dissatisfaction, 28 percent, however, think it is not likely that they will leave teaching within the next five years.

The intent to leave teaching was related to age and years of experience. Most of the people who said they are likely to leave within five years are mature professionals, many of whom may be contemplating retirement. Of those who are very likely to leave, 61 percent are over 44 years old, even though the survey was designed to avoid teachers who are over 50. A total of 28 percent of this age group is likely to leave teaching soon.

Still, a significant number of beginning teachers are thinking about entering a different occupation. Few young teachers said that it is very likely that they will leave, but, many of these teachers reported they they are fairly likely to change occupations. Among teachers who are younger than 35, 25 percent said they are very likely or fairly likely to discontinue teaching

TABLE 2. LIKELIHOOD OF LEAVING TEACHING WITHIN FIVE YEARS

Percentage responses to:

Within the next five years, how likely is it that you will leave teaching to go into some other career or activity? (N=845)

| | |
|---|---|
| Very likely | 7% |
| Fairly likely | 15 |
| Not sure | 17 |
| Not too likely | 37 |
| Not at all likely | 24 |
| No answer | 1 |
| Total | 100% (rounded) |

SOURCE: Higher Education Coordinating Board Survey, (1986).

within five years. Teachers who are age 35 to 44 reported the least likelihood of leaving teaching.

Plans to leave teaching also were related to the grade level of children taught. Senior high school teachers were more likely to report intentions to leave than elementary school teachers. Middle or junior high school teachers were the least sure about their future plans.

The intent to leave teaching was not related to the location of the teacher's school or to sex, educational attainment, self-assessed teaching ability, enrollment in a graduate education program, or a preference for an extended teaching contract.

## REASONS FOR LEAVING TEACHING

As shown in Table 3, a desire to develop new interests and abilities was the most commonly given reason for changing careers given by those teachers who said they are likely to leave teaching within five years. Nearly three-fourths, 71 percent gave this reason. Alternative career paths in education, the topic of the rest of this report, may be one way to address a desire to grow professionally and personally throughout one's life.

More than half the teachers likely to leave teaching cited personal reasons or the desire to increase their income. Income considerations were cited by 57 percent, and personal reasons, including retirement, were cited by 54 percent. Much of the recent focus on teaching has addressed a need to improve the working conditions and respect given to teachers. Dissatisfaction with these aspects of teaching was given as a reason for leaving by 38 and 39 percent, respectively, of the teachers who are likely to quit.

TABLE 3. REASONS FOR LEAVING TEACHING

Percentage responses to:

If you were to leave teaching, which of the following reasons would be important factors in that decision? (N=184)

| | |
|---|---|
| Interest in developing other interests and abilities | 71% |
| Desire or need for more income | 57 |
| Family responsibilities, health, other personal reasons | 54 |
| Dissatisfaction with school administration or organization | 45 |
| Desire for more prestige or respect | 39 |
| Desire for better working conditions | 38 |
| Poor student discipline, attitudes or motivation | 33 |
| Other (unrequested leave, burnout, lack of parental support) | 11 |

NOTE: Includes only teachers who said they are very likely or fairly likely to leave teaching within five years. Multiple reasons could be given.

SOURCE: Higher Education Coordinating Board Survey, (1986).

**TABLE 4. PROBABLE CAREER AFTER LEAVING TEACHING**

Percentage responses to:

If you were to leave teaching, what sort of career would you probably enter? (N=184)

| | |
|---|---|
| A career in a field other than education | 41% |
| An education-related career in industry, business, or a community agency | 20 |
| Another type of career in a school, school district, or college | 18 |
| Probably would not seek paid employment | 11 |
| Not sure | 10 |
| Total | 100% |

NOTE: Includes only teachers who said they are very likely or fairly likely to leave teaching within five years.

SOURCE: Higher Education Coordinating Board Survey, (1986).

## ALTERNATIVE CAREER PLANS

The most common career plan of teachers who are likely to leave teaching is to locate employment in a field outside education. Forty-one percent gave this objective, as shown in Table 4. Another 20 percent would seek to use their skills in an education-related career in industry, business, or a community agency.

Eighteen percent plan to find a different job in an educational setting--a school, school district office, or college. Chapters III and IV of this report present findings about teachers' interest in pursuing several different career opportunities in elementary and secondary education, including administrative positions and alternative teaching roles.

## CHAPTER III. ATTITUDES TOWARD ALTERNATIVE ROLES FOR TEACHERS

Administrative jobs in education, such as superintendent and principal, are traditional career options for teachers. Indeed, one of the limitations of teaching as a career has been that increasing compensation, responsibility, and authority have not been available to teachers unless they go into administrative careers.

In response to student needs and the growing professionalization of teaching, however, teaching jobs may become more varied in terms of specific responsibilities for instruction. These alternative teaching roles could provide teachers with opportunities for career growth and diversity without their leaving the classroom. Under some staffing structures, teachers could also be offered increased compensation for a longer work year or for advanced responsibility.

This chapter presents findings about teachers' interest in pursuing certain administrative and teaching career paths in education. It also presents data on the attitudes of principals toward alternative teaching roles.

### TEACHERS' INTEREST IN ALTERNATIVE CAREERS IN EDUCATION

Most teachers think that one or more administrative positions or alternative teaching careers would be more satisfying than their current jobs. Given a choice of 17 other positions in education, 60 percent of the teachers selected one or more as more satisfying. Twenty-five percent chose one or two roles, 20 percent chose 3 to 5 roles, and 15 percent chose 5 or more roles as more satisfying than their current jobs.

No one position was the clear favorite of teachers, however. Of eight possible administrative or support positions, the most attractive was teacher educator at a college or university, which was seen as more satisfying by 27 percent of the teachers surveyed, as shown in Table 5. The jobs of superintendent and principal, traditional career paths, were viewed as more attractive by only 6 percent and 8 percent, respectively.

Some alternative teaching roles are viewed more favorably than most administrative positions. The jobs of mentor teacher, lead teacher, and adjunct teacher educator were judged to be more satisfying than regular teaching jobs by the greatest numbers of teachers. Still these roles were selected as more satisfying by a minority.

## Differences by Satisfaction with Teaching as a Career

For all but two administrative or teaching jobs, attractiveness was significantly related to teachers' overall satisfaction with their choice of teaching as a career. In general, teachers who were very satisfied with teaching were less likely to think that a particular alternative career in education would be more satisfying. The two exceptions were mentor teacher and lead teacher which attracted satisfied teachers in about the same proportions as teachers who were less satisfied.

## Differences by Location

Teachers in Duluth, Minneapolis, and St. Paul were more likely to be attracted to being a curriculum specialist, mentor teacher, resource teacher or diagnostician/testing expert than teachers in other locations. Attraction to other administrative and teaching positions did not differ significantly by location.

TABLE 5. ATTRACTIVENESS OF ALTERNATIVE CAREERS IN EDUCATION TO TEACHERS (N=845)

| Alternative Careers | Comparison With Current Teaching Position: More Satisfying | Equally Satisfying | Less Satisfying | No Answer |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Administrative or Support Positions | | | | |
| Superintendent | 6% | 16% | 73% | 5% |
| Principal or assistant principal | 8 | 26 | 60 | 5 |
| Guidance counselor, school psychologist, or school social worker | 10 | 42 | 42 | 5 |
| Staff development specialist or coordinator | 14 | 32 | 50 | 5 |
| Curriculum development specialist or curriculum coordinator | 13 | 35 | 47 | 5 |
| Special education administrator | 5 | 17 | 73 | 5 |
| Community education director | 7 | 26 | 61 | 5 |
| Teacher educator at a college or university | 27 | 42 | 26 | 6 |
| Teaching Positions that Also Include Specialized Functions | | | | |
| **Mentor teacher** assigned to orient new teachers and help them continue developing their teaching skills | 26 | 45 | 24 | 5 |
| **Lead teacher** responsible for giving direction to a team of other teachers, teaching assistants and aides who share responsibility for the instruction of a group of students | 24 | 40 | 31 | 5 |
| **Resource teacher** in a designated area of expertise to help colleagues with specialized needs select curricula, locate learning resources, and improve instruction | 21 | 41 | 33 | 5 |

(CONTINUED)

TABLE 5. ATTRACTIVENESS OF ALTERNATIVE CAREERS IN EDUCATION TO TEACHERS (N=845) (CONTINUED)

| Alternative Careers | Comparison With Current Teaching Position: More Satisfying | Equally Satisfying | Less Satisfying | No Answer |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Evaluator** who assesses the performance of teachers in the same school or in different schools for purposes of making employment, tenure, and licensing decisions | 10% | 21% | 64% | 5% |
| **Researcher** who conducts local studies to help teachers and administrators improve instruction | 11 | 25 | 59 | 5 |
| **Adjunct teacher educator** affiliated with a college of education to supervise student teaching and other field experiences in a preservice teacher education program | 22 | 39 | 34 | 5 |
| **Diagnostician/testing expert** responsible for identifying individual learning needs | 9 | 28 | 59 | 5 |
| **School site manager** who participates in school budget, staffing and program decisions in cooperation with other teachers, parents, community residents and building administrators | 9 | 21 | 65 | 5 |
| **Teacher in private practice** who contracts with a school district for authority and responsibility to deliver instructional services as a self-employed individual or as a member of a professional partnership with other teachers | 15 | 37 | 43 | 5 |

NOTE: Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

SOURCE: Higher Education Coordinating Board Survey, (1986).

**Differences by Grade Level**

Senior high school teachers were more attracted than other teachers to being a community education director, teacher educator, or teacher in private practice. Elementary school teachers were the most attracted to a career as a diagnostician/testing expert. Attraction to other positions did not differ significantly by grade level.

**Differences by Degrees Held**

The higher the level of educational attainment, the more likely a teacher was attracted by the roles of staff development specialist, lead teacher, evaluator, or resource teacher. Teachers with master's degrees, but not specialist or doctorate degrees, were more likely than other teachers to be attracted to being a researcher, diagnostician/testing expert, or a school site manager. Teachers holding only baccalaureate degrees were proportionately more likely to be interested in becoming a principal. Attraction to other positions did not differ significantly by degree held.

**Differences by Enrollment in Graduate Education**

For 11 positions--principal, staff development specialist, curriculum development specialist, special education administrator, mentor teacher, lead teacher, resource teacher, researcher, adjunct teacher educator, school site manager, and teacher in private practice--attractiveness was positively related to being enrolled in a graduate program related to a career in education. For the remaining positions, attractiveness did not differ significantly by enrollment in a graduate program.

### Differences by Sex

Men were more attracted than women to being a superintendent, principal, community education director, teacher educator, mentor teacher, evaluator, or school site manager. Women were more attracted than men to being a diagnostician/testing expert. Attraction to other positions did not differ significantly by sex.

### Differences by Age and Experience

Age and experience were related to attraction to being a guidance counselor, staff development specialist, community education director, teacher educator, resource teacher, and adjunct teacher educator. In general, teachers who had 5 to 20 years of experience or who were 30 to 44 years old were more interested in these positions than older teachers or teachers at the beginning of their careers. Attraction to other positions did not differ by age or years of experience.

### Differences by Teaching Ability

Teachers who rated their teaching ability as outstanding were more likely than other teachers to be interested in positions as lead teacher or teacher evaluator. Attraction to other positions did not differ by self-assessed teaching ability.

## PRINCIPALS' ATTITUDES TOWARD ALTERNATIVE TEACHING ROLES

### Experience with Alternative Teaching Roles

Minnesota principals have not experimented widely with most alternative teaching roles in their schools. As shown in Table 6, 57 percent of the principals surveyed said that they have assigned resource teachers. Less than half the principals, however, have direct experience in their schools with each

TABLE 6. PRINCIPALS' EXPERIENCE WITH ALTERNATIVE TEACHING ROLES (N=425)

| Alternative Teaching Roles | Teachers Performing this Role in School Within Past Five Years: Yes | No | No Answer/ Don't Know |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Mentor teacher** assigned to orient new teachers and help them continue developing their teaching skills | 32% | 66% | 3% |
| **Lead teacher** responsible for giving direction to a team of other teachers, teaching assistants and aides who share responsibility for the instruction of a group of students | 37 | 61 | 2 |
| **Resource teacher** in a designated area of expertise to help colleagues with specialized needs select curricula, locate learning resources, and improve instruction | 57 | 41 | 2 |
| **Evaluator** who assesses the performance of teachers in the same school or in different schools for purposes of making employment, tenure, and licensing decisions | 23 | 75 | 3 |
| **Researcher** who conducts local studies to help teachers and administrators improve instruction | 17 | 78 | 5 |
| **Adjunct teacher educator** affiliated with a college of education to supervise student teaching and other field experiences in a pre-service teacher education program | 20 | 75 | 5 |
| **Diagnostician/testing expert** responsible for identifying individual learning needs | 47 | 50 | 3 |

(CONTINUED)

TABLE 6. PRINCIPALS' EXPERIENCE WITH ALTERNATIVE TEACHING ROLES (N=425) (CONTINUED)

| Alternative Teaching Roles | Teachers Performing this Role in School Within Past Five Years: Yes | No | No Answer/ Don't Know |
|---|---|---|---|
| **School site manager** who participates in school budget, staffing and program decisions in cooperation with other teachers, parents, community residents and building administrators | 16% | 80% | 4% |
| **Teacher in private practice** who contracts with a school district for authority and responsibility to deliver instructional services as a self-employed individual or as a member of a professional partnership with other teachers | 4 | 92 | 4 |

NOTE: Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

SOURCE: Higher Education Coordinating Board Survey, (1986).

of the other alternative teaching roles. Diagnostic/testing experts were the second most common alternative role, used by 47 percent of the schools. Less than 4 percent of the principals have hired teachers in private practice to assume responsibility for instructional services.

Except for using evaluator positions, schools in small towns or rural areas outside the Twin Cities metropolitan area have not tried alternative teaching roles as frequently as schools in the metropolitan area or schools in Rochester, St. Cloud, Moorhead, Mankato, or Winona.

Larger schools were more likely than smaller schools to have used teachers as mentors, lead teachers, resource teachers, or researchers. School size was not significantly related to experience with other alternative roles.

Elementary schools were more likely than secondary schools to have had teachers assigned to be mentors, lead teachers, or resource teachers. School grade level was not significantly related to experience with other alternative roles.

## Effects on Student Learning

Consistent with their limited experience with alternative teaching roles, many principals said they did not know what the effects of such roles would be on student learning or on teachers' job satisfaction.

Questions about these effects also were left unanswered by many principals. It is possible that some principals who have not employed alternative teaching roles in their schools did not understand that they were supposed to answer these questions on the survey. The interpretation of results in Tables 7 and 8, therefore, must be tentative.

As shown in Table 7, principals with an opinion of the probable effects of alternative teaching roles on student learning generally thought the effects

TABLE 7. PRINCIPALS' EVALUATION OF THE EFFECTS OF ALTERNATIVE TEACHING ROLES ON STUDENT LEARNING (N=425)

| Alternative Teaching Roles | Positive | Mixed or Neutral | Negative | No Answer/ Don't Know |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Mentor teacher** assigned to orient new teachers and help them continue developing their teaching skills | 47% | 12% | 1% | 41% |
| **Lead teacher** responsible for giving direction to a team of other teachers, teaching assistants and aides who share responsibility for the instruction of a group of students | 46 | 17 | 2 | 36 |
| **Resource teacher** in a designated area of expertise to help colleagues with specialized needs select curricula, locate learning resources, and improve instruction | 62 | 12 | 2 | 24 |
| **Evaluator** who assesses the performance of teachers in the same school or in different schools for purposes of making employment, tenure, and licensing decisions | 27 | 18 | 10 | 45 |
| **Researcher** who conducts local studies to help teachers and administrators improve instruction | 31 | 17 | 2 | 50 |
| **Adjunct teacher educator** affiliated with a college of education to supervise student teaching and other field experiences in a pre-service teacher education program | 28 | 19 | 3 | 51 |
| **Diagnostician/testing expert** responsible for identifying individual learning needs | 53 | 13 | 2 | 32 |

(CONTINUED)

TABLE 7. PRINCIPALS' EVALUATION OF THE EFFECTS OF ALTERNATIVE TEACHING ROLES ON STUDENT LEARNING (N=425) (CONTINUED)

| Alternative Teaching Roles | Positive | Mixed or Neutral | Negative | No Answer/ Don't Know |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **School site manager** who participates in school budget, staffing and program decisions in cooperation with other teachers, parents, community residents and building administrators | 21% | 20% | 5% | 54% |
| **Teacher in private practice** who contracts with a school district for authority and responsibility to deliver instructional services as a self-employed individual or as a member of a professional partnership with other teachers | 10 | 17 | 9 | 64 |

NOTE: Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

SOURCE: Higher Education Coordinating Board Survey, (1986).

would be positive or neutral. Resource teachers and diagnostic/testing experts were the roles most frequently judged to positively affect student learning. The largest numbers of negative responses were given to the positions of evaluator and teacher in private practice.

Generally, there were no significant relationships between the size, location, or grade level of school and opinions about the probable effects on student learning. There were two exceptions to this finding. Principals of senior high schools were less positive about the effects of adjunct teacher educators than principals of elementary, junior high, or middle schools. Principals of schools with an enrollment of 1,000 or more were less positive about the effects of diagnostic/testing experts than principals of smaller schools.

## Effects on Teachers' Job Satisfaction

Findings about principals' opinions of the probable effects of alternative teaching roles on teachers' job satisfaction are similar to findings about the effects on student learning. As shown in Table 8, large numbers of principals did not give an opinion. For those who did, the effects were judged to be generally positive or neutral. Resource and mentor roles received the greatest numbers of positive responses. Evaluators and teachers in private practice received the greatest number of negative responses. The role of teachers in private practice was the only role receiving more negative than positive responses.

School location, size, or grade level generally were not related to opinions about the effects of alternative teaching roles on teachers' job satisfaction. The position of lead teacher was an exception. The larger the school, the more positively principals rated the effects of lead teachers on job

satisfaction. Also, principals of schools with an enrollment of 250 to 499 were less positive about the effects of evaluators on job satisfaction than principals of smaller or larger schools.

TABLE 8. PRINCIPALS' EVALUATION OF THE EFFECTS OF ALTERNATIVE TEACHING ROLES ON TEACHERS' JOB SATISFACTION (N=425)

| Alternative Teaching Roles | Positive | Mixed or Neutral | Negative | No Answer/ Don't Know |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Mentor teacher** assigned to orient new teachers and help them continue developing their teaching skills | 54% | 10% | 1% | 35% |
| **Lead teacher** responsible for giving direction to a team of other teachers, teaching assistants and aides who share responsibility for the instruction of a group of students | 44 | 19 | 3 | 34 |
| **Resource teacher** in a designated area of expertise to help colleagues with specialized needs select curricula, locate learning resources, and improve instruction | 60 | 14 | 2 | 24 |
| **Evaluator** who assesses the performance of teachers in the same school or in different schools for purposes of making employment, tenure, and licensing decisions | 22 | 21 | 13 | 45 |
| **Researcher** who conducts local studies to help teachers and administrators improve instruction | 28 | 19 | 2 | 51 |
| **Adjunct teacher educator** affiliated with a college of education to supervise student teaching and other field experiences in a preservice teacher education program | 30 | 17 | 2 | 52 |
| **Diagnostician/testing expert** responsible for identifying individual learning needs | 48 | 16 | 1 | 35 |

(CONTINUED)

TABLE 8. PRINCIPALS' EVALUATION OF THE EFFECTS OF ALTERNATIVE TEACHING ROLES ON TEACHERS' JOB SATISFACTION (N=425) (CONTINUED)

| Alternative Teaching Roles | Positive | Mixed or Neutral | Negative | No Answer/ Don't Know |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **School site manager** who participates in school budget, staffing and program decisions in cooperation with other teachers, parents, community residents and building administrators | 24% | 15% | 6% | 55% |
| **Teacher in private practice** who contracts with a school district for authority and responsibility to deliver instructional services as a self-employed individual or as a member of a professional partnership with other teachers | 7 | 15 | 16 | 62 |

NOTE: Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

SOURCE: Higher Education Coordinating Board Survey, (1986).

## CHAPTER IV. ATTITUDES TOWARD THE CAREER TEACHER ROLE UNDER THE MINNESOTA IMPROVED LEARNING LAW

The Minnesota Improved Learning Law defines the role of a career teacher. This chapter describes the attitudes of teachers and principals toward this concept, the education they think teachers would need to perform the functions defined in the law, and barriers to implementation in Minnesota schools.

### DESCRIPTION OF CAREER TEACHERS

The career teaching role defined in statute implies a radical restructuring of the teaching profession, student learning, and school management. It has not been tested widely in Minnesota schools. Many teachers and principals may not be fully aware of the concept and its intended effects. To provide a basis for questions about career teachers, surveys of teachers and principals contained the following description, developed in consultation with the author of the Improved Learning Law:

- Career teachers continue to teach, but they work an extended year in order to assume an additional diagnostic and instructional role. Under their extended contracts, career teachers are each responsible for developing and coordinating individual learning plans for up to 125 students. They work with these students for several years, but they are not the only teachers of these students. The longer year provides additional time beyond the classroom. Career teachers receive additional pay commensurate with their educational preparation, experience and longer work year.

- Career teachers design and follow each student's learning plan to take advantage of the appropriate mix of independent study, tutoring, small groups, large classes, and instructional technology. Career teachers, teachers, educational assistants, and aides work together to provide this instruction.

- o Career teachers collaborate with parents, other teachers, community organizations, and other resources to provide learning opportunities that address each student's learning needs. Planned learning may take place in the school, home, or community--during the regular school year or during summer months--in individual or in group settings.

## ATTITUDES TOWARD THE POTENTIAL IMPACTS OF THE ROLE OF A CAREER TEACHER

### Teachers

**Interest in Extended Contracts.** The career teaching role provides an opportunity to work and be paid for more than nine months of each year. Using the standards of other professions, teaching is essentially a part-time employment opportunity which limits the income it provides. Extended contracts are one way to increase the incomes of some teachers without installing controversial merit pay programs or promotional ladders.

As seen in Table 9, only 19 percent of the teachers surveyed would like to work an extended year. Nearly two-thirds, 64 percent, prefer the traditional school calendar. A recent study in Maine found that one of the leading reasons teachers are attracted to teaching is the opportunity during summers to pursue other interests and family obligations.[10]

The year 'round employment pattern of career teachers appears to be both a positive and negative factor, depending on teachers' personal circumstances.

**Attraction to the Role of a Career Teacher.** The career teaching role appeals to a substantial minority of Minnesota teachers. It is not a role for everyone, but there is sufficient interest to believe it would be an attractive career path for some teachers.

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10. Lars H. Rydell, Barbara J. Gage, and Andrea L. Colnes, Teacher Recruitment and Retention in Maine, Joint Standing Committee on Education, 112th Maine Legislature, Second Regular Session, (February 1986).

**TABLE 9. TEACHERS' INTEREST IN EXTENDED CONTRACTS**

Percentage responses to:

If you had the option, would you prefer to work 11 or 12 months each year and receive additional pay rather than work and be paid for a nine-month school year? (N=845)

| | |
|---|---|
| Yes | 19% |
| No | 64 |
| Not sure/No answer | 17 |
| | 100% |

SOURCE: Higher Education Coordinating Board Survey, (1986).

Teachers were asked whether they think the role of the career teacher would be more satisfying, equally satisfying, or less satisfying then their current teaching job. As shown in Table 10, 23 percent said that the role would probably be more satisfying, but 31 percent said that it would be less satisfying than the teaching job they hold today. Forty percent thought that the career teacher role would be equally satisfying.

**Characteristics of Teachers Attracted to the Career Teacher Role**. A favorable attitude toward being a career teacher was not statistically related to the teacher's level of school, school location, own educational level, sex, age, self-reported teaching ability, or years of experience in teaching.

The career teaching role was most attractive to teachers who are ambivalent about their current jobs or in the middle in terms of job satisfaction. Teachers who are definitely satisfied or definitely dissatisfied with teaching were less likely to be interested in being a career teacher. It appears that teachers who are most happy with their careers are not attracted by a potential change while teachers who are most dissatisfied have decided that teaching has drawbacks for them that cannot be removed by shifting responsibilities within the same environment.

Significantly, however, teachers who say they are likely to leave teaching within five years are more likely to be attracted by the career teaching role than teachers who plan to remain, as shown in Table 11. Career teaching opportunities, therefore, may be effective in retaining people in the teaching profession.

Compared with other teachers who say they probably will leave teaching, teachers attracted to being a career teacher are especially likely to mention the desire for more prestige or respect as a motivating factor. There are no statistical differences between the two groups with regard to leaving for

TABLE 10. ATTITUDES OF TEACHERS AND PRINCIPALS TOWARD THE ROLE OF THE CAREER TEACHER UNDER THE IMPROVED LEARNING LAW

| Teachers (N=845) | More Satisfying | Equally Satisfying | Less Satisfying | No Answer/ Don't Know |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Probable satisfaction compared with current teaching job | 23% | 40% | 31% | 6% |

| Principals (N=425) | Positive | Mixed or Neutral | Negative | No Answer/ Don't Know |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Probable effects on student learning | 56% | 16% | 2% | 26% |
| Probable effects on teachers' job satisfaction | 48 | 24 | 3 | 25 |

SOURCE: Higher Education Coordinating Board Survey, (1986).

TABLE 11. PERCENTAGES OF TEACHERS ATTRACTED TO CAREER TEACHING VERSUS LIKELIHOOD OF LEAVING TEACHING WITHIN FIVE YEARS

| Plans to Leave Teaching Within Five Years | Comparison of Career Teacher Role and Current Teaching Job | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | More Satisfying | Equally Satisfying | Less Satisfying |
| Very likely | 38% | 39% | 23% |
| Fairly likely | 38 | 34 | 28 |
| Not sure | 35 | 40 | 26 |
| Not too likely | 20 | 47 | 34 |
| Not at all likely | 13 | 43 | 43 |

NOTE: N=790. Teachers who did not answer the question about the anticipated level of satisfaction as a career teacher are omitted from the table.

SOURCE: Higher Education Coordinating Board Survey, (1986).

personal reasons, for more income, or to develop other interests and abilities. Teachers who are and are not attracted to being a career teacher did not differ in the extent to which dissatisfaction with the school administration or student behavior are factors contributing to the desire to leave teaching.

Attraction to career teaching is significantly related to a preference to work an extended school year. Teachers interested in career teaching also are attracted by other alternative roles in education, such as administrative and counseling positions and other emerging teaching roles, such as mentor teacher or lead teacher.

Teachers who are now enrolled in a graduate degree program related to their career in education were statistically more likely to report that the career teacher role is personally attractive than teachers not pursuing further education in their profession. This finding seems consistent with an interpretation that career teaching will be most attractive to teachers who are looking for more satisfaction from their careers, but still believe they can find it by staying in education, perhaps in a different role.

## Principals

The career teacher concept enjoys promising support among Minnesota principals.

Principals were asked about the effects that career teachers would have on student learning and on teachers' job satisfaction in their schools. As shown in Table 10, principals generally believed the effects on these characteristics would be positive or neutral.

In each case, however, one-fourth of the principals did not know or gave no response, indicating that the career teaching concept is not yet well understood. Only a few principals, six percent, said they have assigned career

teachers in their schools during the past five years.

Among principals who had an opinion, the probable effects of career teachers on student learning and teachers' job satisfaction were rated as very positive. For student learning, 76 percent of the principals having an opinion believe the effects would be positive. For teachers' job satisfaction, 64 percent said the effects would be positive. This result indicates that the career teacher role may be viewed even more positively as principals become familiar with it.

Principals' judgments about the effects of career teachers on student learning were not statistically related to the level or size of the school. Although principals in all locations were positive about the probable impact on student learning, principals in the smaller cities and rural areas were somewhat more likely to believe that career teachers would improve student learning than principals in the Twin Cities metropolitan area or Duluth.

Principals' opinions about the role of career teachers and teachers' job satisfaction did not differ by level, size, or location of the school.

## THE EDUCATION OF CAREER TEACHERS

Teachers and principals share similar opinions about the training that today's teachers would probably need before they could assume the role of the career teacher as defined in the Improved Learning Law, as shown in Table 12. In general, they support the need for specific graduate opportunities designed for persons intending to be career teachers.

Teachers would need additional education before they could incorporate non-school agencies and organizations into a learning plan, according to 72 percent of the teachers and 75 percent of the principals. Similarly, 72 percent of the teachers and 71 percent of the principals said that teachers would need

TABLE 12. PERCENTAGES OF TEACHERS AND PRINCIPALS WHO SAY ADDITIONAL EDUCATION WOULD BE NEEDED TO BE A CAREER TEACHER UNDER THE IMPROVED LEARNING LAW

| Career Teacher Responsibilities | Teachers (N=845) | Principals (N=425) |
|---|---|---|
| Incorporating non-school agencies and organizations into a learning plan | 72% | 75% |
| Dealing with emotional and family problems through school programs and through referrals to other agencies | 72 | 71 |
| Determining for each student the appropriate use of small group learning, individualized learning, educational technology and other forms of learning | 51 | 57 |
| Assessing and diagnosing individual learning needs | 53 | 50 |
| Incorporating family activities, hobbies and self-directed learning into a learning plan | 38 | 60 |
| Developing cooperative, collegial relationships with other teachers who are part of each learning plan | 31 | 35 |
| Consulting with parents to determine an on-going plan for their child | 21 | 22 |

SOURCE: Higher Education Coordinating Board Survey, (1986).

further education in order to deal with emotional or family problems through school programs and through referrals to other agencies. Significantly, both responsibilities of the career teacher involve contacts outside the classroom, the sole work setting of most teachers today.

Teachers and principals are somewhat more confident that teachers are already well-prepared to diagnose individual learning needs and determine the most appropriate learning method, but at least half think that more education would be required to perform these functions as a career teacher. Only about one-fifth, or 21 percent of the teachers and 22 percent of the principals, believe that career teachers need specific programs to help them learn to consult with parents about learning objectives and methods.

## BARRIERS TO IMPLEMENTING THE CAREER TEACHER ROLE

Although principals report positive attitudes toward the potential benefits of career teachers, they see several significant attitudinal and structural barriers to employing this concept in school staffing.

As shown in Table 13, 72 percent of the principals said that lack of funding is a major barrier, and only 4 percent did not think funding is a barrier at all. While it is possible to fund the extended contracts for career teachers by reorganizing other teaching functions, principals do not appear knowledgeable or ready to take this step. They therefore assume that additional funding is needed to support career teachers.

Constraints of collective bargaining contracts were reported to be a major barrier to employing career teachers by 52 percent of the principals and a minor barrier by another 22 percent.

Unfamiliarity with the career teacher role and how to implement it was seen as a major or minor barrier by 81 percent. This finding is consistent with the

TABLE 13. BARRIERS TO IMPLEMENTING THE CAREER TEACHER ROLE AS SEEN BY PRINCIPALS (N=425)

| Potential Barrier | Percentage of Principals | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Major Barrier | Minor Barrier | Not a Barrier | No Answer/ Not Sure |
| Lack of funding | 72% | 11% | 4% | 14% |
| Constraints of negotiated collective bargaining agreement | 52 | 22 | 7 | 19 |
| Teachers not educated to perform this role | 31 | 48 | 16 | 5 |
| Unfamiliarity with this concept and how it can be implemented | 29 | 52 | 13 | 6 |
| Problems in deciding which teachers would be offered these positions | 15 | 49 | 29 | 8 |
| Teacher opposition | 15 | 32 | 26 | 27 |
| No real need or value in this school | 5 | 14 | 56 | 25 |
| Parental opposition | 2 | 17 | 53 | 28 |
| Other | 3 | 1 | 0 | 96 |

NOTE: Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

SOURCE: Higher Education Coordinating Board Survey, (1986).

large numbers, roughly one-fourth of the respondents, who are not sure about the need for career teachers or how they would be received by parents or other teachers. Among principals who gave an opinion, only 19 percent questioned the need or potential value of career teachers in their school. Again, principals appear to like the idea of career teachers once they become familiar with it.

One of the objectives of this study is to examine the need for a loan forgiveness program for career teachers. Such a program could be used to increase the numbers of teachers who are educationally prepared to be career teachers. Significantly, 31 percent of the principals report that lack of teacher preparation for this role is a major barrier to implementation, and 48 percent say it is a minor barrier. Programs to encourage teachers to enroll in further education for the career teaching role would help to remove this barrier, but it is only one of several obstacles to widespread use in the Minnesota schools.

## A WORD ABOUT TERMINOLOGY

Several teachers wrote comments on their surveys protesting the term career teachers. The following comment is typical: "I do not like the name 'career teacher.' Teaching is already a career and adding the word career on implies that teachers don't have a career, that their job is not as important (or more important) than a career doctor or a career lawyer. Find another name!"

## CONCLUSIONS

Review of the findings in the chapter leads to the following conclusions:

- Career teaching would probably be an attractive career option for a limited number of people who basically like teaching but who have identified aspects of their career that they would like to change.

Like any new idea, the career teacher role receives mixed ratings from teachers and principals. A small but significant minority of teachers are willing to work under an extended contract or are attracted by the responsibilities of a career teacher.

Over three-fourths, 76 percent, of the teachers responding are satisfied or very satisfied with their choice of teaching as a career, and most of the prospective career teachers would be drawn from this group. On a proportional basis, however, teachers who are in the middle in terms of job satisfaction were especially likely to say that being a career teacher might be more enjoyable than their current job.

The career teacher role appears to have particularly strong appeal to teachers who are likely to leave teaching. It could, therefore, help to retain people within the profession. Career teachers would probably be drawn from teachers who have many satisfactions from teaching and would like to stay in education, but believe that teaching as it is now structured cannot satisfy their long term career goals.

- o Principals, the employers of teachers, think career teaching is an attractive concept, but they have many reservations about implementing it in their schools.

Principals tend to believe that career teachers would have positive or neutral effects on student learning and on teachers' job satisfaction, or they do not express an opinion on likely effects. Few principals believe the effects would be negative. When asked about barriers to implementation, however, principals see many of them.

These findings indicate that the career teacher concept is appealing to principals but that lack of information and perceived structural barriers could inhibit its adoption by the schools.

- o A program of teacher education would be needed if Minnesota schools were expected to start using career teachers widely.

The study provides evidence that teacher training, either on an in-service basis or in graduate programs, would be needed to staff Minnesota schools with qualified career teachers. Both principals and teachers agree on the career teaching functions that are not included in most teachers' education, and principals see lack of qualified staff to be one of several barriers to using career teachers.

## CHAPTER V. NEED FOR A LOAN FORGIVENESS PROGRAM FOR CAREER TEACHERS UNDER THE MINNESOTA IMPROVED LEARNING LAW

A primary goal of this study was to analyze the need for a loan forgiveness program to encourage teachers to enroll in graduate education programs that would prepare them to be career teachers under the Minnesota Improved Learning Law. This chapter therefore examines the potential of a career teacher loan forgiveness program as a strategy to implement desired changes in Minnesota education.

### GOALS AND DESIGN OF LOAN FORGIVENESS PROGRAMS

Loan forgiveness programs are one of several ways in which financial aid can be used to increase the supply of persons with needed skills. Other forms of financial aid used for this purpose are grants, subsidized loans that must be repaid by all recipients, payment of educational expenses in return for a required service commitment, and subsidized employment while the student is enrolled in a training program.

Loan forgiveness programs usually provide financial aid to students enrolled in eligible training but then release the recipient from all or part of the loan repayment if he or she later works in the occupation. A particular location or employment setting may be a condition for forgiving the loan.

An effective program of financial aid to address shortages must be designed carefully to achieve its objective. Otherwise, the program results in a windfall to people with a certain career objective but does not increase the number of people who enter the targeted occupation.

Some of the factors to consider are the specific occupational fields, geographic areas, or employment settings where shortages have been documented,

the size of the award necessary to induce desired career changes, the kind of educational institutions and programs that are eligible, selection criteria to identify people who are likely to follow through with the intended career objective, the length and kinds of employment that will fulfill the service obligation, and the terms of repayment for recipients who do not complete the employment obligation.[11]

Experience with loan forgiveness programs indicates that they have not been successful in addressing shortages because the amounts were too small, the benefits were too far into the future, and the forgiveness provisions of the loan were not known to many recipients. Programs in which all recipients are expected to fulfill a service requirement, such as the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC), have had better success in relieving shortages than programs that are presented as loans for which later service is optional. While service payback programs are a form of loan forgiveness, they provide an "up-front" benefit that recipients are more willing to pay back by using their skills than participants in other loan forgiveness designs.[12]

## TEACHERS' ATTITUDES TOWARD A LOAN FORGIVENESS PROGRAM FOR CAREER TEACHERS

### Interest in Participation

Nearly half, 42 percent, of the teachers surveyed said that they probably or definitely would participate in a program to reimburse them for the costs of preparing to become a career teacher on the condition that they work as a career teacher for three to five years. These responses are shown in Table 14. Since

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11. Arthur M. Hauptman, "Financial Incentives for Attracting Students to Teaching Careers," Paper Prepared for the Minnesota Higher Education Coordinating Board, (September, 1984).
12. David M. Arfin, "The Use of Financial Aid to Attract Talented Students to Teaching: Lessons from Other Fields," The Elementary School Journal, Vol. 86, No. 4, (1986).

**TABLE 14. TEACHERS' INTEREST IN PARTICIPATING IN A LOAN FORGIVENESS PROGRAM FOR CAREER TEACHERS**

Percentage responses to:

If a program were available to reimburse you for the costs of preparing to become a career teacher, would you participate on the condition that you work as a career teacher for 3-5 years? (N=845)

| | |
|---|---|
| Definitely yes | 15% |
| Probably yes | 27 |
| Not sure | 34 |
| Probably no | 17 |
| Definitely no | 7 |
| | 100% |

NOTE: Total rounded to 100%.

SOURCE: Higher Education Coordinating Board Survey, (1986).

this level of interest exceeds the 23 percent who think that the role of a career teacher would be more satisfying than their current job, teachers may be attracted by more than the desire to increase their job satisfaction. Other perceived benefits could be the opportunity for year 'round employment and the professional growth afforded by taking different responsibilities.

Some teachers may have viewed the program as an opportunity to borrow for any futher education. Others may not have remembered the definition of the career teacher given earlier in the survey. As indicated in Chapter IV, the term career teacher is difficult for some teachers to differentiate from a general commitment to teaching.

**Reasons for Not Participating**

Among teachers who are unsure or not interested in a loan forgiveness program for career teachers, the most common reasons reflect uncertainty about the long term prospects for working in this role. As shown in Table 15, 69 percent would not want to commit themselves to being a career teacher as a condition of converting the loan into a grant. Similarly, 54 percent said that they are uncertain about whether they could get a position as a career teacher. The third most commonly cited reason, lack of interest in being a career teacher, was given by 45 percent of those teachers who do not react favorably toward participating in a loan forgiveness program.

Most of the reasons for not participating written on the survey concern personal considerations such as the desire to have summers off, family responsibilities, and retirement plans. Several teachers expressed doubts about the value of the career teaching concept or a need for more information. The potential for burnout from an extended work year and concerns that the responsibilities described for the career teacher were too much work for one person even under an extended contract also were mentioned.

TABLE 15. REASONS WHY TEACHERS WOULD NOT PARTICIPATE IN A LOAN FORGIVENESS PROGRAM

| Reason | Percentage of Teachers Saying Reason is Important (N=441) |
|---|---|
| Would not want to commit in advance to serve as a career teacher | 69% |
| Uncertain about employment opportunities for career teachers | 54 |
| Not interested in working as a career teacher | 45 |
| Do not want to enroll in further graduate education | 22 |
| Other | 20 |
| Do not need further education to perform the role of a career teacher | 18 |

NOTE: Table based on teachers who checked not sure, probably no or definitly no in response to question abput participating in a loan forgiveness program for career teachers.

SOURCE: Higher Education Coordinating Board Survey, (1986).

## DISADVANTAGES AND ADVANTAGES OF IMPLEMENTING A LOAN FORGIVENESS PROGRAM FOR CAREER TEACHERS

A loan forgiveness program for career teachers would promote the goals of the Minnesota Improved Learning Law by working to increase the supply of teachers educated to perform role of a career teacher. This section analyzes the disadvantages and advantages of this strategy in light of the survey responses of Minnesota teachers and principals.

### Disadvantages

A loan forgiveness program for career teachers presumes that an available supply of people prepared to assume the role of a career teacher would enable and encourage schools to use this staffing and educational concept. Survey data from principals, however, indicate that there are several perceived obstacles to using career teachers other than the lack of prepared professionals. If schools did not respond to an increased supply by hiring career teachers, people who had taken the loans would be left without a viable service option, and the program would not achieve its objective of making career teachers available to students.

So far, the career teaching model has been used in limited settings. Teachers may be unwilling to take a risk on a new concept with unproven career potential. In response to survey questions, teachers who are not interested in a loan forgiveness program identified concerns about the service commitment and career teacher employment opportunities.

Loan forgiveness programs generally have not been used to create demand for people with particular skills. They have been a response to markets in which employers are unable to hire appropriately trained people for established

vacancies. The required service programs, which have been the most effective version of the loan forgiveness idea, particularly depend on guaranteed placement of all participants after they have completed their education.

**Advantages**

Many principals believe that the career teacher concept could improve student learning and teachers' job satisfaction. Although the career teaching role is not personally attractive to all teachers, it appeals to enough teachers to become a specialized function within teaching. Further, those teachers who are attracted to the career teaching role are likely to be people who may leave teaching unless they can develop new career opportunities within the profession.

Despite the apparent level of support, schools have not used the career teacher concept widely even though the Improved Learning Law has existed for five years. From this experience, it appears that the concept probably will not develop rapidly unless more aggressive policies are adopted to promote it. Survey results indicate that both teachers and principals think that teachers will need new professional skills if they are to assume the responsibilities of a career teacher. Lack of a sufficient number of prepared teachers, therefore, appears to be a barrier to implementing more programs under the Improved Learning Law.

A loan forgiveness program is one strategy to address this problem. The main intended benefit would be to prepare a cadre of professional teachers available to schools that are implementing programs under the Improved Learning Law. It also would give visibility to the career teacher concept and enable teachers to become familiar with the philosophic basis of the role. As teachers take advantage of the program, new graduate education programs presumably would develop in response to the demand.

To be effective, a loan forgiveness program must offer substantial benefit to participants; minor subsidies of the costs of education would be unlikely to increase the supply of career teachers. Also, a loan forgiveness program would not be effective in encouraging teachers to participate in short, inexpensive education programs. A loan forgiveness program, therefore, is compatible only with a decision to expect career teachers to invest in lengthy educational preparation. If a loan forgiveness program were implemented, consideration should be given to a structure that requires later service as a career teacher rather than an optional service payback.

## OTHER STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE USE OF CAREER TEACHERS

A loan forgiveness program is only one of several ways Minnesota could try to increase the use of career teachers. A few of these strategies also would be directed toward enlarging the pool of teachers educated to assume career teaching responsibilities. Other strategies could be developed to increase the demand for such professionals in the schools by attacking other barriers to implementation.

### Increasing the Supply of Career Teachers

Since the employment opportunities for career teachers are not now well-developed, it may be necessary for the state to assume more of the risk of preparing new career teachers than a loan forgiveness program would imply. Educational programs that are fully supported with public funds, perhaps tied to school demonstration sites, would allow teachers to pursue appropriate education at no financial risk. Other strategies could be to defer development of specific, lengthy graduate degree programs but to institute a program of in-service education or to incorporate the career teaching concept into established graduate programs for teachers.

**Increasing the Demand for Career Teachers**

Strategies could be developed to promote awareness of the career teaching model in order to build upon the support that emerges when it is understood. These strategies would be directed toward removing the perceptual and other barriers that currently trouble principals. While grants have been available to support some career teaching functions, they have been too small to induce schools to undertake the fundamental reforms implied by the Improved Learning Law. Demonstration sites that reorganize entire educational programs to take advantage of the full potential of the career teaching model may be one way of correcting misperceptions and resolving implementation problems. Once the career teaching concept is well-established as an emerging career path, teachers may be willing to assume the financial and other risks of preparing for the new responsibilities of this role.

## CHAPTER VI. CONCLUSIONS

This study has shown that many Minnesota teachers believe that another teaching or administrative role in education could provide more satisfaction than their current teaching jobs. In general, more teachers are attracted to alternative teaching roles than to administrative or support positions. In other words, most teachers do not want to become administrators.

Administrative or support positions, however, have been established as the major advanced career options in education. Alternative teaching roles have been used less and so their potential for increasing the attractiveness of careers in education is largely unexploited.

Furthermore, teachers who are less satisfied with teaching are more likely to be attracted to alternative teaching roles than teachers who are very happy in their current positions. The development of alternative career paths for teachers, therefore, may contribute to retaining people in teaching who would otherwise leave the profession.

No one alternative teaching career emerged as a clear favorite of teachers. To improve retention, a variety of alternative roles should be available to teachers as they grow professionally. The role of mentor teacher for beginning teachers, as recommended by the Task Force on Teacher Education for Minnesota's Future in fall 1986, is one option that received particularly favorable ratings by teachers.

The role of the career teacher under the Minnesota Improved Learning Law is another such attractive career option. Furthermore, principals see this role as potentially enhancing student learning and teachers' job satisfaction. Several significant barriers to implementing this far-reaching role in the schools were identified, including funding and collective bargaining provisions.

A loan forgiveness program to finance the education of career teachers would address only teachers' lack of prior preparation for the responsibilities of a career teacher. A loan forgiveness program, however, would be difficult to promote unless the employment opportunities for career teachers were better established. Other strategies, such as demonstration sites and fully supported educational programs, could build understanding and demand for career teachers in Minnesota schools.

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